

## First Focus

### New Poll: Republican Voters Want a Strong Children's Health Bill

9/24/2007

**ALEXANDRIA, VA** – Today, **First Focus**, a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children and families a priority in federal policy decisions, released **nationwide polling data confirming strong support for children's health coverage legislation among Republican voters**. The poll, conducted by Republican polling firm **Fabrizio McLaughlin & Associates**, found that by 62-31% -- a 2-to-1 margin of support -- Republican voters support Congressional passage of a bill that would extend and strengthen the popular State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). In addition, the poll found that by a 4-to-3 margin Republican voters are less likely to vote to reelect their Members of Congress if they oppose the legislation.

"This poll confirms the strong bipartisan support enjoyed by the Children's Health Insurance Program, and it sends a message that those Members of Congress opposing the SCHIP legislation are ignoring the wishes of the American electorate when it comes to the health and well-being of children. Republican voters want Congress and the President to deliver a strong children's health bill, and they are saying they will hold accountable politicians who stand in the way," said **First Focus President Bruce Lesley**.

Congress is expected to consider legislation this week that would extend the SCHIP program, which provides coverage to six million American children whose working parents earn too little to afford private health insurance. The current Congressional proposal would strengthen the program, allowing it to cover an additional three million uninsured children. Financing for this legislation comes from an increase in federal tobacco taxes. Although the President has repeatedly threatened to veto the bill, this poll indicates that a majority of Republican voters disagree with the President and want Republican members of the House and Senate to vote for a strong SCHIP bill.

According to Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates, "by a 2 to 1 margin, a majority of Republicans favor renewing and providing additional resources for the State Children's Health Program."

The poll, conducted this weekend using a nationwide sample of 1,000 Republican voters, also found that by a 59-31% margin (almost a 2-to-1 margin), Republican voters want their elected representatives to support the bill, even understanding its cost of \$35 billion over 5 years with a tobacco tax increase.

"This is not a Democrat or Republican issue. This is an American issue that concerns us all," said Lesley.

In addition to Republican voters, Republican governors from nine states including Alaska, California, Georgia, Minnesota and Utah, among others are also asking Congress to stand with children. Governor Jon Huntsman (R-UT) said in a recent statement, "CHIP is a much-needed safety net for uninsured kids and Congress showed tremendous foresight in authorizing it a decade ago. Uninsured children are the state's No. 1 priority." Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-CA), an outspoken supporter of the program, has called reauthorization of SCHIP "one of my top federal priorities this year" and lauded the proposed \$50 billion increase. Schwarzenegger said the additional funding, "is absolutely essential to ensure the continued success" of the program.

The poll was conducted from September 21st through the 23rd and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3%. The poll was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, as part of its work in on behalf of disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the United States.

This data validates First Focus polling by GOP pollster Frank Luntz indicating that by a margin of 66- 17%, Americans are less likely to vote for their Senator or Congressman in the next election if they did not support legislation aimed specifically at reducing the number of uninsured children in America.